

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 CEQ-02 COA-02 COME-00 EB-11 EPA-04 IO-12

NSF-04 SCI-06 OST-04 INT-08 SCEM-02 FPC-01 INRE-00

RSR-01 /169 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 794

UNCLAS OTTAWA 0801

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SENV, CA

SUBJECT: SKAGIT VALLEY FLOODING

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF RESPONSE BY MINISTER ENVIRONMENT
DAVIS TO QUESTION POSED IN HOUSE COMMONS APR 3 ON CURRENT
STATE OF SKAGIT VALLEY FLOODING ISSUE AND ON DESIRABILITY
OF ROSS GROUP BRIEF BEFORE FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION:
BEGIN TEXT:

" IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON.
MEMBER FOR VANCOUVER SOUTH (MR. FRASER), I WOULD SAY
THE FOLLOWING. THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, BOTH SEPARATELY AND JOINTLY, HAVE
SAID THAT THE FLOODING OF THE SKAGIT VALLEY IN BRITISH
COLUMBIA WILL NOT TAKE PLACE. THIS MESSAGE, LOUD AND
CLEAR, HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON. IT IS A
MESSAGE WHICH HAS BEEN RECEIVED THERE WITH CONCERN.

" WE HAVE NOW HAD A REPLY FROM THE UNITED STATES
STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS. THEY AGREE, IN PRINCIPLE,
TO THE CONVENING OF A MEETING OR A SERIES OF MEETINGS
WITH THE TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES WITH A VIEW TO TERMINATING
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A LONG- STANDING CONTRACT. THE TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES ARE THE SEATTLE CITY LIGHT COMPANY, OWNED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, IN CANADA.

" THE DATE OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE FOUR PARTIES, THE TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES, SEATTLE CITY LIGHT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, SUPPORTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CANADA, HAS NOT BEEN SET. IT IS EXPECTED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL BE SOME TIME WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH. THIS IS A MATTER WHICH I WILL BE TAKING UP ON MONDAY, APRIL 9, WITH MR. RUSSELL TRAIN, CHAIRMAN OF PRESIDENT NIXON' S ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL, WHEN HE COMES TO OTTAWA TO DISCUSS THIS AND OTHER MATTERS.

" THE UNITED STATES STATE DEPARTMENT RAISED THE MATTER WITH PREMIER BARRETT WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY. HE AGREED, TO EXPLORE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES ORIGINATING WITH SEATTLE CITY LIGHT, ONE OF WHICH WAS THE SUPPLY OF POWER FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA IN LIEU OF THE POWER THAT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN GENERATED BY THE ROSS DAM IN THE UNITED STATES, THE RESERVOIR OF WHICH WOULD HAVE FLOODED BACK INTO CANADA.

" AS I UNDERSTAND IT, MR. BARRETT' S RESPONSE WAS ONE OF INTEREST BUT NOT OF FINAL COMMITMENT. IN UNDERSTAND SEATTLE CITY LIGHT HAS SINCE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE BRITISH COLUMBIA HYDRO AUTHORITY WITH A VIEW TO NEGOTIATING AN EXPORT OF POWER FROM CANADA IN LIEU OF POWER WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN GENERATED IN THE UNITED STATES FROM CANADIAN WATER FLOWING DOWN THE SKAGIT VALLEY.

" THE HON. MEMBER FOR VANCOUVER SOUTH ASKED ABOUT THE ROSS GROUP. I THINK THE ROSS GROUP IS RIGHT IN NOT SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME AND MONEY PREPARING A BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO THE FLOODING. IT SHOULD NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE ITS WATCHING BRIEF. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, SEATTLE CITY LIGHT IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE U. S. FEDERAL POWER COMMISSION. THE DATE HAS BEEN PUT OFF AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF MONTHS TO DECEMBER, 1973. HOPEFULLY, LONG BEFORE THOSE HEARINGS BEGIN AND LONG BEFORE IT WOULD BE NECESSARY UNCLASSIFIED

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FOR CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA OTHERWISE TO INTERVENE IN

THOSE HEARINGS, THERE WILL BE MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATION BETWEEN
SEATTLE CITY LIGHT AND BRITISH COLUMBIA WHICH WILL TERMINATE
THIS THREAT OF FLOODING IN THE SKAGIT VALLEY FOREVER."
END TEXT.
SCHMIDT

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